

a.) Amendment to the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) An agent for treating ~~or delaying the onset of~~ arthritis which comprises, as active ingredients:

(i) leaves or branch ends of *Hydrangea macrophylla* Seringe var.

Thunbergii Makino, or an extract of said leaves or branch ends; and

(ii) an amino sugar or a salt thereof, or glycosaminoglycan or a salt thereof,

said parts (i) and (ii) being present at a composition ratio of from 1:50 to 50:1 parts by weight.

Claim 2 (Cancelled).

3. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The agent for treating ~~or~~ ~~delaying the onset of~~ arthritis according to claim 1, wherein the *Hydrangea macrophylla* Seringe var. Thunbergii Makino is *Hydrangeae Dulcis Folium*.

4. (Currently Amended) The agent for treating ~~or delaying the onset of~~ arthritis according to either of claims 1 or 3, wherein the amino sugar is glucosamine or a salt thereof.

5. (Currently Amended) The agent for treating ~~or delaying the onset of~~ arthritis according to either of claims 1 or 3, wherein the glycosaminoglycan is chondroitin sulfate or a salt thereof.

6. (Currently Amended) A food or drink, further comprising:  
  
leaves or branch ends of *Hydrangea macrophylla* Seringe var. Thunbergii Makino, or an extract of said leaves or branch ends; and  
  
amino sugar or a salt thereof, or glycosaminoglycan or a salt thereof, said parts (i) and (ii) being present at a composition ratio of from 1:50 to 50:1 parts by weight.

7. (Currently Amended) The food or drink according to claim 6, which is used for of treating ~~or delaying the onset of~~ arthritis.

Claim 8 (Cancelled).

9. (Previously Presented) The food or drink according to either of claims 6 or 7, wherein the *Hydrangea macrophylla* Seringe var. Thunbergii Makino is *Hydrangeae Dulcis Folium*.

10. (Previously Presented) The food or drink according to either of claims 6 or 7, wherein the amino sugar is glucosamine or a salt thereof.

11. (Previously Presented) The food or drink according to either of claims 6 or 7, wherein the glycosaminoglycan is chondroitin sulfate or a salt thereof.

Claims 12-17 (Cancelled).

18. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) A method for treating ~~or~~ delaying the onset of arthritis, which comprises administering to a mammal a composition comprising (i) leaves or branch ends of *Hydrangea macrophylla* Seringe var. Thunbergii Makino or an extract of said leaves or branch ends, and (ii) amino sugar or a salt thereof, or glycosaminoglycan or a salt thereof, said parts (i) and (ii) being present at a composition ratio of from 1:50 to 50:1 parts by weight.

Claim 19 (Cancelled).

20. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The method for treating ~~or~~ ~~delaying the onset of~~ arthritis according to claim 19, wherein the *Hydrangea macrophylla* Seringe var. Thunbergii Makino is Hydrangeae Dulcis Folium.

21. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The method for treating ~~or~~ ~~delaying the onset of~~ arthritis according to claim 18 or 20, wherein the amino sugar is glucosamine or a salt thereof.

22. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The method for treating ~~or~~ ~~delaying the onset of~~ arthritis according to claim 18 or 20, wherein the glycosaminoglycan is chondroitin sulfate or a salt thereof.

Claims 23-27 (Cancelled).

28. (Currently Amended) The agent for treating ~~or~~ ~~delaying the onset of~~ arthritis according to claim 4, wherein the glycosaminoglycan is chondroitin sulfate or a salt thereof.

29. (Previously Presented) The food or drink according to claim 9, wherein the amino sugar is glucosamine or a salt thereof.

30. (Previously Presented) The food or drink according to claim 9, wherein the glycosaminoglycan is chondroitin sulfate or a salt thereof.

31. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The method for treating or ~~delaying the onset of~~ arthritis according to claim 21, wherein the glycosaminoglycan is chondroitin sulfate or a salt thereof.

32. (Previously Presented) The food or drink according to claim 29, wherein the glycosaminoglycan is chondroitin sulfate or a salt thereof.